

Endangered Species Program Fiscal Year 2005 Private Stewardship Grants Program

Notice of Availability of Federal Assistance Program Overview Information

Federal Agency Name: Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Endangered Species Program.

Funding Opportunity Title: Fiscal Year 2005 Private Stewardship Grants Program

Announcement Type: Second announcement for the fiscal year 2005 request for proposals

Funding Opportunity Number: PSGP-05

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.632 Private Stewardship Grants Program

Dates: Proposals must be submitted to the Southeast Regional Office by October 4, 2005. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals to their State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for review under Executive Order 12372 (if necessary) concurrent with their submission to our Regional Offices.

Additional Information:

The PSGP provides grants and other assistance on a competitive basis to individuals and groups engaged in private, voluntary conservation efforts that benefit species listed or proposed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), candidate species, or other at-risk species on private lands within the United States.

This Second Call for Proposals for fiscal year 2005 is specifically to solicit proposals for restoration or management actions that will benefit the Ivory-billed woodpecker. The Service is making approximately \$800,000 available for PSGP projects that will assist private landowners who desire to improve existing or potential habitat for the Ivory-billed woodpecker. We expect that proposals for work within the States of Arkansas and Louisiana will be the most competitive since the woodpecker has been recently confirmed in Arkansas and prior to that, it was last documented in Louisiana (Tanner, 1942). Examples of project proposal activities could include habitat restoration or management activities for the Ivory-billed woodpecker, such as tree planting, tree thinning, invasive species control, restoration to address habitat fragmentation issues, girdling of trees, or other forest habitat improvement, management or restoration

activities expected to benefit the species. Eligible projects include those by landowners and their partners who need technical and financial assistance to improve habitat or implement other activities on private lands. Under the PSGP, privately-owned means land that is not owned by a governmental entity. The PSGP supports on-the-ground conservation actions as opposed to, for example, planning or research activities, and we will not fund the acquisition of real property either through fee title or easements. For this unique fiscal year 2005 second request for proposals ONLY, applicants may propose that a small component of the grant proposal be used for outreach and educational purposes directly related to recovery of the species. Outreach or educational components of a larger habitat management or restoration proposal could be directed towards working directly with other private landowners in an attempt to inform them of opportunities, provide technical assistance on habitat management techniques, or encourage them to undertake specific habitat improvement projects. Such outreach efforts should be no more than 10% of the overall requested Federal funds in any proposal submitted.

Private landowners, individually or as a group, are encouraged to submit project proposals for their properties. Additionally, individuals or groups (for example land conservancies, community organizations, or conservation organizations) working with private landowners on conservation efforts are also encouraged to submit project proposals provided they identify specific private landowners who have confirmed their intent to participate on the project or provide other evidence in the project proposal to demonstrate landowner participation will occur.

A PSGP proposal must include at least 10% cost sharing (i.e., at least 10% of total project cost) on the part of the landowner or other non-Federal partners involved in the project. The cost share must come from sources other than the PSGP or other Federal funds.

Information on the PSGP is available at Division of Endangered Species, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Suite 200, 1875 Century Boulevard, Atlanta, Georgia 30345 or electronically at <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/grants/index.html> or also from the Branch of State Grants, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 420, Arlington, Virginia 22203 or electronically at http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/private_stewardship.html or email: Privatestewardship@fws.gov.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

The majority of endangered and threatened species depend, at least in part, upon privately owned lands for their survival. The help of landowners is essential for the conservation of these and other imperiled species. Fortunately, many private landowners want to help. Often, however, the costs associated with implementing conservation actions are greater than a landowner could undertake without financial assistance. The Private Stewardship Grants Program (PSGP) provides grants and other assistance on a competitive basis to individuals and groups engaged in private, voluntary conservation efforts that benefit species listed or proposed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), candidate species, or other at-risk species on private lands within the United States.

We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), are soliciting project proposals for Federal assistance under the PSGP specifically for projects that may benefit the federally listed

endangered Ivory-billed woodpecker. On April 28, 2005, rediscovery of the Ivory-billed woodpecker on Cache River National Wildlife Refuge in Arkansas was announced. The species was thought to be extinct for the last 60 years. This remarkable rediscovery was praised by conservationists, and the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture proposed to commit more than \$10 million in federal funding towards the conservation of the species. This call for proposals represents a cooperative conservation effort to reach out to private landowners who desire to work with the Service and its many partners to benefit this species.

The Ivory-billed woodpecker is the largest woodpecker in the United States and has historically preferred expansive areas of mature forestland with embedded patches of recently disturbed forest resulting from hurricanes, tornadoes, fire or other natural disturbances. Its diet is known to be largely dependent on wood boring beetle larvae found in recently dead and dying trees although during some times of the year, it feeds on vegetable matter. The bird is thought to mate for life, is a cavity-nester, and in the Mississippi Delta, it is known to nest in a variety of hardwood and cypress trees while in other areas where there is nesting data, it has used ash, hackberry, bald cypress, cabbage palms and pine. The species has an extraordinarily large home-range, and it has been estimated that one pair of Ivory-billed woodpeckers need 6 – 10 square miles or more of habitat.

The Service has recently named the Executive Committee of the Recovery Team for the Ivory-billed woodpecker, as well as the co-Chairs for the Biology Working Group, the Habitat Management and Conservation Working Group and the Corridor of Hope Conservation Group. In view of the significance of this scientific finding and the desire on behalf of the Service to work closely with interested landowners, the Service is initiating this second call for project proposals to private landowners who wish to be active partners in the efforts towards recovery of this unique bird. This grant program provides a tool to develop partnerships and work more closely with private landowners, conservation groups and other private parties. The grant proposals received will be carefully reviewed by a diverse panel representing the scientific community, the forestry industry, the agricultural industry, state representatives and the Service. There will be close coordination with the Recovery Team and the Working Groups during the grant solicitation and review process.

This document describes how you can apply for funding under the PSGP and how we will determine which project proposals will be funded. In fiscal year 2004, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service awarded approximately \$7 million to 97 projects in 39 states through the PSGP. For fiscal year 2005, approximately \$6.5 million is available for project funding. Approximately \$800,000 is being made available to undertake restoration projects on private lands to benefit the Ivory-billed woodpecker. We expect that proposals for work within the States of Arkansas and Louisiana will be the most competitive since the woodpecker was recently confirmed in Arkansas and prior to that, it was last documented in Louisiana (Tanner, 1942).

Eligible projects include those by landowners and their partners who need technical and financial assistance to improve habitat or implement other activities on private lands. Under the PSGP, privately-owned means land that is not owned by a governmental entity. The PSGP supports on-the-ground conservation actions as opposed to, for example, planning or research activities, and we will not fund the acquisition of real property either through fee title or easements. For this

unique fiscal year 2005 second request for proposals ONLY, applicants may propose that a small component of the grant proposal be used for outreach and educational purposes directly related to recovery of the species. Outreach or educational components of a larger habitat management or restoration proposal could be directed towards working directly with other private landowners in an attempt to inform them of opportunities, provide technical assistance on habitat management techniques, or encourage them to undertake specific habitat improvement projects. Such outreach efforts should be no more than 10% of the overall requested Federal funds in any proposal submitted.

Private landowners, individually or as a group, are encouraged to submit project proposals for their properties. Additionally, individuals or groups (for example land conservancies, community organizations, or conservation organizations) working with private landowners on conservation efforts are also encouraged to submit project proposals provided they identify specific private landowners who have confirmed their intent to participate on the project or provide other specific evidence in the project proposal to demonstrate landowner participation will occur.

The Service may be able to assist landowners in planning or implementing projects. We strongly encourage you to contact the Private Stewardship Grants Program Coordinator in the Southeast Region (Table 1) and the Ecological Services' Field Supervisor in the proposed project area (Table 2) prior to the development of your proposal. Through multiple programs, we offer a variety of expertise to assist landowners in planning and implementing projects on private lands. Among others, the Service's Endangered Species Program and Fish and Wildlife Management and Habitat Restoration Programs have worked hand-in-hand with a variety of partners on private lands. The Service's ability to assist landowners will depend upon the type of project proposed and an assessment of how the project fits into our existing workloads and priorities. Due to the limited time available for such assistance, it may be necessary to submit the project proposal for funding under a future PSGP Request for Proposals. For additional information on how the Service may be able to assist you, contact the Program Contact in the Southeast Regional Office identified in Table 1 or the Ecological Services' Field Supervisor in your project area (See Table 2). Information is also available from the Service's Internet site at <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/grants/index.html>

In addition, many other Federal, State, Territory, or Tribal agencies, as well as conservation organizations, work closely with landowners and may be able to assist with planning and implementing a project. Local governments, such as your county or city, may also have personnel that could assist you in developing a project proposal. For general guidance on developing and writing grant proposals, see the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance's Internet site at: http://12.46.245.173/pls/portal30/CATALOG.GRANT_PROPOSAL_DYN.show

A PSGP proposal must include at least 10% cost sharing (i.e., at least 10 percent of total project cost) on the part of the landowner or other non-Federal partners involved in the project (the cost-share may be an in-kind contribution, including equipment, materials, operations, and maintenance costs). The cost share must come from sources other than the PSGP or other Federal funds.

Interested individuals and groups prepare proposals that describe their project and its expected benefits for the Ivory-billed woodpecker. The Service, in cooperation with the grantees, must address Federal compliance issues, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Endangered Species Act. For the projects that are selected to receive funding, we will provide additional guidance on compliance with these requirements. Please see Section III for minimum eligibility criteria and Section V for additional application review information, including proposal evaluation criteria.

Proposals will compete at the Regional level for funding. Within the Southeast Region, a diverse panel of representatives from State and Federal governments, conservation organizations, agriculture and development interests, and the science community will assess the applications and make funding recommendations to the Service. The Service's Regional Office will invite and select the individuals to participate on the panels. The purpose of using the diverse panels is to obtain individual advice on project selection from an array of interests involved with conservation efforts on private lands. The Service will use the individual panel member recommendations in selecting projects, although geographic distribution of projects, the amount of funding requested for a project compared with the total amount of funding available, and other such factors may also be considered. Partial funding of one or more projects, when practicable, may be considered. After reviewing the individual panel member recommendations, coordinating with the Recovery Team and Working Groups, and consideration of other factors, the Service's Director will make funding selections, subject only to the final approval of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

Awards will be announced through a national press release and a letter to the award recipient notifying them of the selection for an award. This letter is not an authorization to begin performance. The final exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the prospective recipient and the Service's representatives. The prospective recipient will be asked to sign an agreement that specifies the project requirements, such as the cost share, the project design, the time commitment for maintaining the project's benefits, and the reporting requirements, and that provides for Service access to the project area in order to check on its progress. In order to receive funding, a prospective recipient will also need to provide assurances and certifications of compliance with other Federal requirements (for example see Standard Form 424-B and Department of the Interior form DI-2010 available at <http://training.fws.gov/fedaid/toolkit/toolkit.pdf>). The recipient is reimbursed based on the cost-sharing formula in the Agreement. An applicant should not initiate a project in expectation of PSGP funding, nor should they purchase materials or begin work until such time as they receive the final grant award document signed by an authorized Service official.

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501) the Office of Management and Budget has approved, and assigned clearance number 1018-0118, to this information collection.

II. Award Information

In fiscal year 2004, the Service awarded approximately \$7 million to 97 projects in 39 states through the Private Stewardship Grant Program (PSGP). For fiscal year 2005 approximately \$6.5 million is available for project funding. The Service will make approximately \$800,000 of the \$6.5 million available for projects to benefit habitat of the Ivory-billed woodpecker. The Service will make selections based upon those proposals submitted for consideration through this announcement. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals for projects that would supplement existing projects. For projects funded with PSGP funds in prior years, applicants are encouraged to describe how prior year funding has been utilized. These proposals will compete along with applications for new awards.

The PSGP provides grants and other assistance on a competitive basis to individuals and groups engaged in private, voluntary conservation efforts that benefit species listed or proposed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), candidate species, or other at-risk species on private lands within the United States. Grant and/or cooperative agreements may be implemented. For cooperative agreements, the substantial involvement by the Service will be determined on a case by case basis. For additional information regarding cooperative agreements please contact the Regional Office Coordinator as listed in Table 1 of Section IV.1.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

Private landowners, individually or as a group, are encouraged to submit project proposals for their properties. Additionally, individuals or groups (for example land conservancies, community organizations, or conservation organizations) working with private landowners on conservation efforts are also encouraged to submit project proposals provided they identify specific private landowners who have confirmed their intent to participate on the project or provide other specific evidence in the project proposal to demonstrate landowner participation will occur. In order to receive funding, projects will need to ensure that landowners are willing to allow the Service access to the project area in order to check on its progress when necessary.

State government agencies are not eligible to receive PSGP funding (including as a subrecipient). The Service has established a separate program specifically designed to facilitate State government partnerships with private landowners, the Landowner Incentive Program. State agencies are encouraged to assist landowners in developing PSGP project proposals, to provide cost share when feasible, or to participate in other ways on project implementation. However, State agencies are not eligible to apply for PSGP funding directly.

Other non-Federal governmental entities or affiliates, including Counties or other local governments or State-supported universities, are eligible to apply for PSGP funding in order to assist private landowners in planning and implementing a project. As with other groups that apply on behalf of the private landowners, they must identify specific private landowners who

have confirmed their intent to participate on the project or provide other evidence in the project proposal to demonstrate that landowner participation will occur.

Please see Section IV.5 for additional funding restrictions.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

A project proposal must include at least 10% cost sharing (i.e., at least 10 percent of total project cost) on the part of the landowner or other non-Federal partners involved in the project (the cost-share may be an in-kind contribution, including equipment, materials, operations, and maintenance costs). The cost share must come from sources other than the PSGP or other Federal funds. Applications submitted without at least a 10% cost sharing will not be considered eligible.

Please see Section IV.5 for additional funding restrictions.

3. Other

Eligible projects include those by landowners and their partners who need technical and financial assistance to improve habitat or implement other activities on private lands for the benefit of the Ivory-billed woodpecker and other endangered, threatened, proposed, candidate, or other at-risk species (plants and animals). Under the PSGP, privately-owned means land that is not owned by a governmental entity.

For information on which species are endangered, threatened, proposed, or candidates, please visit the Service's Internet site at <http://endangered.fws.gov/wildlife.html>. For the purposes of the PSGP, an "at-risk species" is any species formally recognized as a species of conservation concern, such as species listed by a State or Territory. We recommend that you contact your State natural resources agency to determine which species are recognized as species of conservation concern (e.g., State listed as endangered, threatened, special concern, or other similar designations). If your State does not identify species of conservation concern or in addition to those species identified by the State, we will also consider any species or subspecies listed by NatureServe as "critically imperiled" (designated by rank "G1" or "T1"), "imperiled" (designated by rank "G2" or "T2"), or "vulnerable" (designated by rank "G3" or "T3") to be an at-risk species for the purposes of the PSGP. For information on NatureServe rankings, please visit their Internet site at <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/>

The PSGP supports on-the-ground conservation actions as opposed to, for example, planning or research activities. For this unique fiscal year 2005 second request for proposals ONLY, applicants may propose that a small component of the grant proposal be used for outreach and educational purposes directly related to recovery of the species. Outreach or educational components of a larger habitat management or restoration proposal could be directed towards working directly with other private landowners in an attempt to inform them of opportunities, provide technical assistance on habitat management techniques, or encourage them to undertake specific habitat improvement projects. Such outreach efforts should be no more than 10% of the overall requested Federal funds in any proposal submitted. Examples of project proposal

activities could include habitat restoration or management activities for the Ivory-billed woodpecker, such as tree planting, tree thinning, invasive species control, restoration to address habitat fragmentation issues, girdling of trees, or other forest habitat improvement, management or restoration activities expected to benefit the species. This is not an exhaustive list of the various projects that may be funded under the PSGP. We recognize that there is a multitude of ways to benefit imperiled species conservation on private lands. While we will not fund the acquisition of real property either through fee title or easements, we are not excluding any other approach from consideration so long as it can demonstrate tangible on-the-ground benefits to the imperiled species in question and meet the other eligibility criteria established for the PSGP.

The following criteria must be satisfied for a proposal to be considered for funding:

(1) The project must involve voluntary conservation efforts on behalf of private landowners within the United States (i.e., U.S. States and Territories). As a voluntary program, we will not grant funding for projects that serve to satisfy regulatory requirements of the Act, including complying with a biological opinion under section 7 of the Act or fulfilling commitments of a Habitat Conservation Plan under section 10 of the Act, or for projects that serve to satisfy other local, State, or Federal regulatory requirements (e.g., mitigation for local, State, or Federal permits).

(2) The project must benefit the Ivory-billed woodpecker. We will not award grants to fund the acquisition of real property either through fee title or easements. However, habitat improvements over and above any existing requirements for lands covered under current easements or other such conservation tools would be considered eligible for funding.

(3) The proposal must include at least 10% cost sharing (i.e., at least 10 percent of total project cost) on the part of the landowner or other non-Federal partners involved in the project (the cost-share may be an in-kind contribution, including equipment, materials, operations, and maintenance costs). The cost share must come from sources other than the PSGP or other Federal funds.

(4) The proposal must either identify at least some of the specific landowners who have confirmed their intent to participate in the private conservation efforts (not all participating landowners need to be identified at the time of the proposal submission) or provide other information to demonstrate that the project, if funded, would have full landowner participation.

(5) The proposal must include a reasonably detailed budget indicating how the funding will be used and how each partner is contributing. The proposal must also indicate the time commitment for maintaining the project's benefits. A project begins on the effective date of an award agreement between you and an authorized representative of the U.S. Government and ends on the date specified in the award. Accordingly, we cannot reimburse you for time that you expend or costs that you incur in developing a project or preparing the application, or in any discussions or negotiations you may have with us prior to the award. We will not accept such expenditures as part of your cost share. We will also not consider fees or profits as allowable costs in your application. The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs you incur, including the

value of in-kind contributions, in accomplishing project objectives during the life of the project. The costs proposed to be funded through the PSGP may not exceed 90% of the total costs.

(6) The proposal must include quantifiable measures that can be used to evaluate the project's success. These quantifiable measures must be specific, clear, and provide demonstrable benefits to the target species such as increased habitat quantity or quality. The project proposal should specify in detail how the habitat quantity or quality will be improved (e.g., acres, species, etc.) and the anticipated use of that habitat by the target species (e.g., numbers, duration, etc.). For example, a proposal might specify the number of acres restored by planting specific native plants. Proposed methods of monitoring, evaluating, and reporting these measures in comparison to an initial baseline should also be included in the proposal.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages may be obtained by accessing our Internet site:

<http://www.fws.gov/southeast/grants/index.html> or you may contact the Regional Office PSGP Program Coordinator listed in Table 1. We strongly encourage you to contact the PSGP Program Coordinator for your respective Region prior to the development of your proposal. Close coordination is also encouraged with the appropriate Ecological Services' Field Supervisor (Table 2).

Table 1. Regional Private Stewardship Grant Program Coordinator

Service Region	Regional PSGP Contact	Phone Number
Southeast Region	Ms. "Mike" Gantt	919/856-4627

Table 2. Ecological Services' Field Supervisor Contact Numbers.

State	Field Supervisor	Phone
North Carolina	Pete Benjamin	919/856-4520 (x11)
South Carolina	Tim Hall	843/727-4707 (x15)
Georgia	Sandy Tucker	706/613-9493 (x230)
Florida (North)	Dave Hankla	904/232-2580
Florida (South)	Jay Slack	772/562-3909
Florida (Panhandle)	Gail Carmody	850/769-0552
Alabama	Larry Goldman	251/441-5181
Mississippi	Ray Aycock	601/965-4900
Arkansas	Allan Mueller	501/513-4475

Louisiana	Russell Watson	337/291-3100
Texas (North)	Tom Cloud	817/277-1100
Texas (Southeast)	Carlos Mendoza	281/286-8282

2. Content and Form of Application

You must follow the instructions in this document in order to apply for financial assistance under the PSGP. For a description of the information that must be included in a project proposal, please follow the format outlined below. Your project proposal should not be bound in any manner and must be printed on one side only. You must submit one signed original and two signed copies of your project proposal (including supporting information). We will not accept facsimile project proposals. Your unbound (a binder clip is allowed) project proposal and signed and dated Standard Form 424 "Application for Federal Assistance" must be received by the Southeast Regional Office at the following address by October 4, 2005:

Mr. Bruce Kennedy
 Attention: Private Stewardship Grant Program
 U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 200
 Atlanta, GA 30345

We encourage you to contact the Regional Program Coordinator listed in Table 1 prior to submitting a project proposal should you have questions regarding what information must be submitted with the project proposal. An incomplete proposal will not be considered for funding.

The project proposal is a narrative description of your project and one required Federal form. The ultimate size of the proposal will depend on its complexity, but we request that you attempt to minimize the size of the narrative description of the proposal. Additionally, only information that is pertinent to the proposal should be included (e.g. it is not necessary to include the resumes of project personnel). Each page should be no larger than 8.5 by 11 inches. You will need to submit an original proposal and two copies; neither the original nor the copies should be permanently bound. This complete application package with detailed instructions and supplementary information can be found at our Internet site:

<http://www.fws.gov/southeast/grants/index.html>

The project proposal should also indicate whether partial funding of the project is practicable, and, if so, what specific portion(s) of the project could be implemented with what level of funding. A project proposal that is a part of a longer-term initiative will be considered; however, the proposed project's objectives, benefits, and tasks must stand on their own, as there are no assurances that additional funding would be awarded in subsequent years for associated or complementary projects.

The Service, the Department of the Interior, and the Office of Management and Budget have established requirements concerning Federal financial assistance. This includes established principles for determining which costs are allowable or eligible based on the type of applicant

(see Table 3 in section VI.2 below). Your project proposal must comply with these requirements.

The narrative description of your project proposal should specifically address each of the eligibility criteria and each of the ranking factors. We recommend the following format for the project narrative:

(1) Title Page. You should list on the Title Page a project title, objectives, duration, summary of costs (amounts of PSGP funding needed and cost sharing), and contact information (name, address and phone number).

(2) Project Description. To be eligible for funding, the project proposal must benefit the Ivory-billed woodpecker, please state clearly how it is expected to benefit from the project, and describe the project's significance for the target species (goals and objectives for the project). Please describe how the location of the project and its role in the landscape affect the conservation of the target species. The proposal must either identify at least some of the specific landowners who have confirmed their intent to participate in the private conservation efforts or provide other information to demonstrate that the project, if funded, would have full landowner participation. Explain why you need government financial assistance for the proposed work. List all other sources of funding you have or are seeking for the project. List any existing Federal, State, Tribal, or local government programs or activities that this project would affect.

(3) Project statement of work. The statement of work is an action plan of activities you will conduct during the period of the project. You must prepare a detailed narrative; fully describing the work you will perform to achieve the project goals and objectives. The narrative should respond to the following questions:

- (a) What is the project design? What specific work, activities, and procedures will you undertake?
- (b) Who will be responsible for carrying out the various activities? Describe how the project will be organized and managed. Identify the person(s) responsible for the project and other project participants.
- (c) What are the project milestones? Each project should first clearly describe the baseline conditions as they exist prior to project implementation. List milestones, describing the specific activities and associated time lines to conduct the scope of work. Describe the time lines in increments (e.g., month 1, month 2), rather than by specific dates.
- (d) Specify the criteria and procedures that you will use to evaluate the relative success or failure of a project in achieving its objectives.
- (e) For what amount of time will you commit to maintain the habitat improvements or other benefits from the project? Describe the steps you will take to ensure that the benefits of the project continue throughout this time period.

(4) Project Budget. You must submit a reasonably detailed budget for the project. The budget should indicate the breakdown of costs proposed to be funded through the PSGP and other costs, through both cash and in-kind contributions. To support your project's budget, also describe briefly the basis for estimating the value of the cost sharing derived from in-kind contributions.

(5) Supporting Documentation. You should include any relevant documents and additional information (maps, background documents) that will help us to understand the project and the problem/opportunity you seek to address.

Federal Assistance Forms: Applicants *must* provide an Application for Federal Assistance, OMB form number SF424. This form is available from <http://www.fedforms.gov> or <http://www.gsa.gov/forms/>, at <http://training.fws.gov/fedaids/toolkit/toolkit.pdf> or from the Regional PSGP coordinator. Applications without this completed form will not be considered.

Data Universal Numbering System Number: On June 27, 2003, The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published a *Federal Register* notice (68 FR 38402) that announced final policy issuance on the use of a universal identifier by grant applicants. The policy requires applicants applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements on or after October 1, 2003 to acquire a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number. It is the responsibility of the organization seeking Federal funds to obtain a DUNS, as necessary. Grant and cooperative agreement applicants (excluding individuals) need to ensure they have a DUNS number. Therefore, private individual landowners submitting proposals for consideration DO NOT need to acquire a DUNS number, however, organizations representing private landowners MUST acquire a DUNS number to be submitted with the proposal. Organizations can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at www.dnb.com

3. Submission Dates and Times

Grant project proposals must be received by the Southeast Regional Office by 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time on October 4, 2005. Proposals not received by this date and time will not be reviewed nor considered as eligible for the competition. To confirm the receipt of your proposal, you must contact the appropriate individual listed in Table 1.

4. Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is subject to Executive Order (EO) 12372 "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Applicants should contact the Service's Regional Office program coordinator (see Table1) and/or the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Federal Executive Order 12372 to determine whether the application is subject to the State intergovernmental review process. The following States and Territories have designated SPOCs: Arkansas, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands. A complete list of the names and addresses for the SPOCs may be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>

5. Funding Restrictions

The project must involve voluntary conservation efforts on behalf of private landowners within the United States (i.e., U.S. States and Territories). As a voluntary program, we will not grant funding for projects that serve to satisfy regulatory requirements of the Act, including complying with a biological opinion under section 7 of the Act or fulfilling commitments of a Habitat Conservation Plan under section 10 of the Act, or for projects that serve to satisfy other local, State, or Federal regulatory requirements (e.g., mitigation for local, State, or Federal permits).

The proposal must include a reasonably detailed budget indicating how the funding will be used and how each partner is contributing. The proposal must also indicate the time commitment for maintaining the project's benefits. A project begins on the effective date of an award agreement between you and an authorized representative of the U.S. Government and ends on the date specified in the award. Accordingly, we cannot reimburse you for time that you expend or costs that you incur in developing a project or preparing the application, or in any discussions or negotiations you may have with us prior to the award. We will not accept such expenditures as part of your cost share. We will also not consider fees or profits as allowable costs in your application. The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs you incur, including the value of in-kind contributions, in accomplishing project objectives during the life of the project. The costs proposed to be funded through the PSGP may not exceed 90% of the total costs. Additionally, we will not fund the acquisition of real property either through fee title or easements.

The final exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the prospective recipient and the Service's representatives. The prospective recipient will be asked to sign an agreement that specifies the project requirements, such as the cost share, the project design, the time commitment for maintaining the project's benefits, and the reporting requirements, and that provides for Service access to the project area in order to check on its progress. In order to receive funding, prospective recipient will also need to provide assurances and certifications of compliance with other Federal requirements (for example see Standard Form 424-B and Department of the Interior form DI-2010 available at <http://training.fws.gov/fedaid/toolkit/toolkit.pdf>). The recipient is reimbursed based on the cost-sharing formula in the Agreement. An applicant should not initiate your project in expectation of PSGP funding, nor should they purchase materials or begin work until such time as they receive the final grant award document signed by an authorized Service official.

6. Other Submission Requirements

At this time, the Service will only be accepting hard copy submission of proposals. We will not accept facsimile project proposals, or electronic submission of proposals. As previously noted, the project proposal is a narrative description of your project and one required Federal form. The ultimate size of the proposal will depend on its complexity, but we request that you attempt to minimize the size of the narrative description of the proposal. Each page should be no larger than 8.5 by 11 inches. You will need to submit an original proposal and two copies; neither the

original nor the copies should be permanently bound (a binder clip is allowed). Applications must be submitted to the Southeast Regional Office as indicated in Section IV.2.

V. Application Review Information

1. Criteria

Members of a diverse panel will individually score each proposal based on a set of ranking factors, which include (1) the number of endangered or threatened species, species proposed or candidates for such listing, and at-risk species that will benefit from the project; (2) the importance of the project to the conservation of those species, including the duration of the benefits, the magnitude of the benefits, and the urgency of the project; and (3) other proposal merits, such as whether the project complements other conservation projects in the area, the project's unique qualities, feasibility of the project, or any other appropriate justifications, including particular strengths in the above categories (e.g., extraordinary benefits).

Due to the wide variety of project proposals that will likely be submitted, the scoring system must provide a relatively high degree of flexibility. Therefore, a scoring system that is relatively simple, but allows project proposals to be evaluated qualitatively as well as quantitatively is desired. The three ranking factors will be scored as described in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Project Proposal Scoring Guidelines (10 points maximum):		
Ranking Factor:	Project Proposal Assessment:	Number of Points:
(1) The number of federally listed, proposed, candidate, or at-risk species that will directly benefit from the project.	5 or fewer species	1
	6 or more species	2
(2) The importance of the project to the conservation of the target species, including the duration of the benefits, the magnitude of the benefits, and the urgency of the project.	Qualitative	1 - 5
(3) Other Proposal Merits. Whether the project complements other projects in the area, the project's unique qualities, feasibility of the project, or any other appropriate justifications, including particular strengths in the above categories (e.g., extraordinary benefits).	Qualitative	0 - 3

2. Review and Selection Process

Proposals will compete at a Regional level for funding. Within the Region, a diverse panel of representatives from State and Federal government, conservation organizations, agriculture and development interests, and the science community will assess the applications and make funding

recommendations to the Service. The Service's Regional Office will invite and select the individuals to participate on the panels. The purpose of using the diverse panel is to obtain individual advice on project selection from an array of interests involved with conservation efforts on private lands. The Service will use the individual panel member recommendations in selecting projects, although geographic distribution of projects, the amount of funding requested for a project compared with the total amount of funding available, and other such factors may also be considered. Partial funding of one or more projects, when practicable, may be considered. After reviewing the individual panel member recommendations and the other factors, the Service's Director will make funding selections, subject only to the final approval of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

3. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The Service anticipates making award announcements for the fiscal year 2005 competition in the Fall of 2005.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices

Awards will be announced through a national press release and a letter to the award recipient notifying them of the selection for an award. This letter is not an authorization to begin performance. An applicant should not initiate a project in expectation of PSGP funding, nor should they purchase materials or begin work until such time as they receive the final grant award document signed by an authorized Service official. Information regarding projects selected for funding will be made available in the national press release. Those individuals or groups that wish to have this information withheld from the public, including the name of the applicant and location of the project MUST clearly state this within the proposal. Upon request the Service will withhold such information to the maximum extent of the law. However, applicants should be aware that applications submitted to the Service for consideration in the PSGP are a matter of public record, and such information is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Unsuccessful applicants will also be notified via telephone, facsimile, electronic mail, or via a letter delivered through the postal mail.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Listed in the table below are the administrative requirements that will apply to your project if funded through the PSGP. The documents listed below establish principles for determining which costs are allowable or eligible ("cost principles") and describe other requirements that apply to receiving PSGP funding. These requirements apply to recipients and subrecipients of PSGP funding. In some cases, the requirements vary depending upon the type of organization receiving the funding or that is a subrecipient of the funding. Each of these documents can be found at our Internet site: http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/private_stewardship.html. For projects that are selected for funding, we will also offer additional technical assistance to facilitate the prospective recipients' understanding of the financial requirements.

On June 27, 2003, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published a *Federal Register* notice (68 FR 38402) that announced final policy issuance on the use of a universal identifier by grant applicants. The policy requires applicants applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements on or after October 1, 2003, to acquire a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number. It is the responsibility of the organization seeking Federal funds to obtain a DUNS, as necessary. Grant and cooperative agreement applicants (excluding individuals) need to ensure they have a DUNS number. Therefore, private individual landowners submitting proposals for consideration DO NOT need to acquire a DUNS number, however, organizations representing private landowners MUST acquire a DUNS number to be submitted with the proposal. Organizations can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at www.dnb.com

Table 3. Administrative Requirements for PSGP Funding Awards	
Category:	Specific Requirements:
Individuals, private firms, and other non-profits excluded from coverage under OMB Circular No. A-122	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Federal Acquisition Regulation Subpart 31.2 * 43 CFR 18 (New Restrictions on Lobbying) * 48 CFR 31 (Contracts with Commercial Organizations)
Non-Profit Organizations covered under OMB Circular No. A-122	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 43 CFR 12 (Administrative and Audit Requirements and Cost Principles for Assistance Programs) * 43 CFR 18 (New Restrictions on Lobbying) * OMB Circular No. A-110 (Administrative Requirements for Grants) * OMB Circular No. A-122 (Cost Principles) * OMB Circular No. A-133 (Audits)
Educational Institutions (even if part of a State or local government)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 43 CFR 12 (Administrative and Audit Requirements and Cost Principles for Assistance Programs) * 43 CFR 18 (New Restrictions on Lobbying) * OMB Circular No. A-21 (Cost Principles) * OMB Circular No. A-110 (Administrative Requirements for Grants) * OMB Circular No. A-133 (Audits)
States, local governments, and Indian Tribes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 43 CFR 12 (Administrative and Audit Requirements and Cost Principles for Assistance Programs) * 43 CFR 18 (New Restrictions on Lobbying) * OMB Circular No. A-87 (Cost Principles) * OMB Circular No. A-102 (Grants and Cooperative Agreements) * OMB Circular No. A-133 (Audits)

This funding opportunity is also subject to Executive Order (EO) 12372 “Intergovernmental review of Federal Programs.” Applicants should contact the Service’s Regional Office program coordinator (see Table1) and/or the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Federal Executive Order 12372 to determine whether the application is subject to the State intergovernmental

review process. The following States and Territories have designated SPOCs: Arkansas, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands. A complete list of the names and addresses for the SPOCs may be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>

3. Reporting

Grant recipients may be required to complete one or more of the following financial forms:

- # SF - 269/269A, Financial Status Report;
- # SF - 270, Request for Advance or Reimbursement;
- # SF - 271, Outlay Report and Request for Reimbursement for Construction Programs; and
- # SF - 272, Federal Cash Transactions Report.

Financial and performance reports are due upon project completion if performance is less than one year, and annually, and upon completion if the period of performance is greater than one year.

Recipients will also be responsible for adhering to OMB Circular A-133, regarding single audit requirements.

Applicants are advised to work with the Southeast Regional Office program contact in Table 1 to determine if any additional reporting requirements must be met based on individual applicant status following the administrative requirements as outlined in Table 3.

Delinquent submittal or non-submittal of reports will be construed by the Service as a failure by the grantee to accomplish objectives and may be grounds for withholding payments; suspending or terminating the award; and barring the recipient from receiving future awards from the Service until the delinquent reports are received.

VII. Agency Contacts

Please refer to Table 1 for the Southeast Regional Office program contact. Information on the PSGP is also available from the Branch of State Grants, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 420, Arlington, VA 22203 or electronically at http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/private_stewardship.html or email: Privatestewardship@fws.gov.

VIII. Other Information

Please note that the Federal Government is not obligated to make any awards as a result of this announcement, and only official Service grant officers can bind the Government to the expenditure of funds.

Please be aware that if you are selected as a Federal grant recipient, the funds you receive maybe subject to Federal and other taxes.